

## ATHENS AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

August 20, 2018, 12 P.M. Athens City Hall Conference Room

Attendees: Sarah Grace, Paul Logue, Shawna Bolin, Keith Andrews, Michele Papai, Jacob Mitchell, Susan Barga, Danita Sharp, Sara Marrs-Maxfield, Noah Trembley

Guests: Citizen Mary Abel, as a representative of the Far East Side Neighborhood Association

- I. **Establish Quorum** – S. Grace called to order at 12:03 with quorum established.
- II. **Disposition of Minutes** – M. Papai moved to accept, P. Logue seconded. Motion carried.
- III. **Commission Specific Introductions** -
  - a. Sarah Grace introduced herself and stated that she currently lives on the near northside. When she and her husband first moved back to Athens some years ago, they bought a duplex on near east side. The ability to earn rental income made the purchase possible. Both sides of the duplex were leased, and she could not induce the tenant to move, because they could not find a place to live that was affordable. Now they have investment properties in the area.
  - b. Shawna Bolin works at Ohio University but lives outside the community, so she has had no personal experience with the housing issue. S. Bolin stated that she experiences a lot of communication from leadership at OU that have a hard time with lack of adequate housing for attracting and retaining talent.
  - c. Michelle Papai came to Athens in the early 90's because her husband got a position with OU. There was very limited housing in their price range at the time. They bought a home in a challenging neighborhood and this house needed a lot of work. They engaged in major renovations in 2002. It was more challenging than expected. They learned that houses often are sold by word of mouth before they hit the market. They have experienced landlords that claim they are purchasing in the neighborhood to rent to a family, but then don't because the earning potential with renting to students is so great.
  - d. Paul Logue stated that he has lived at 7 different addresses in Athens. Currently he lives with his family on the south side. He states that he did not choose this neighborhood, but that is what he could afford. He had to invest about 50K to bring it up to where they needed it to be. He and his wife lived in a rental right in town before they had kids, but we needed a larger place. Would like to live closer to town so he could walk to work, but those homes were not in his price range.
  - e. Sara Marrs-Maxfield moved here in the early 90s and learned that there was nothing in her price range. She and her fiancé at the time, were contemplating moving out to Meigs county when a friend of the family offered a rental at a reasonable price because it was located above their business and they didn't want students there. She and her husband actively looked to buy a house for 5 years and eventually found one on the south side that need a lot of investment. She has lived there ever since. She has also experienced a lot of feedback from local businesses that have talent attrition which they attribute to lack of desirable housing.
  - f. Susan Barga stated that she worked in the OU Inn when she first came to Athens and tried to find a rental in August and that was not very successful. She thought she was going to find an apartment complex with amenities that would cater to professionals. She decided to pursue buying a house on the south side instead of renting as it was more cost effective than the rental options. When she got married she decided she wanted to live in the city. She and her husband built a house in Oakmont. As a real estate agent, she feels her experience is valuable to the commission. Her area of focus is residential housing.
  - g. Danita Sharp has been with OUCU 20 years. She lives in Albany now with her family. She and her husband first purchased a house in Athens township in 2001. They needed more room for their family and built in Albany in 2010. They looked in Athens for a very long time for lots to build on, but they were either too expensive or needed a lot of work. She grew up in Athens on West Washington Street, but the neighborhood started having more students and her mom didn't feel comfortable staying there to raise children in the neighborhood. As an OUCU finance representative, she has seen approvals for financing for clients, but they can't find a home in their price range.

- h. Jacob Mitchell is on the OU student Community Service and Leadership Council, Landlord tenant relations. Affordable rentals can be challenging to find even for students. His family lives on Canterbury and are looking outside the city because they cannot find an affordable option.
- i. Keith Andrews is with the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority. He lives in Meigs County because he prefers the rural area. The AMHA has partnerships with many organizations to be the housing provider. We find that families are forced about 15 miles out of the city because of the competition of rent. Mostly they focus on low-income housing, but they have some home ownership programs too.
- j. Noah Trembly lives in The Plains but looking for another place currently. He did live in a live in a city owned house, but it had some problems and needed to be updated. Noah was asked to join the commission after he lost the election.

IV. **Questions and discussion from review of the Affordable Housing Task Force Recommendation Report** -S. Grace asked if paper copies of the full recommendations are available. M. Papai- no, but much of the full plan had other plans incorporated into it. So, the executive summary is pretty sufficient for our purposes. S. Grace stated that the IOWA city example was interesting, but we do not have as many resources as were outlined in that example. M. Papai – we went to Oxford to look at those options, but the population is quite different because they are closer to urban markets. S. Bolin - do we have comprehensive listing of what housing is where, age, income, rent levels? M. Papai - I don't know, but things have changed in the last 10 years. There have been more apartment complexes built and it has changed the market. S. Barga – within the city of Athens, 79 percent non-owner-occupied units. Another trend we are seeing in the area is that it is lucrative to take a high-end city home and make it an executive rental. We see more landlord that are specialize in executive rentals. K. Andrews shared a report outlining rent and income levels needed to pay the rents.

V. **Danita Sharp – Information on Federal Home Loan Bank 's Affordable Housing Program as a potential financing tool** – Program can be used for rental and ownership projects. Requires a sponsor (developer) has to work with a member (OUCU). D. Sharp stated that she is going to learn more about the program and share with the group. N. Trembly stated that he is having a housing emergency and is going to find a house right after this meeting. He needs accessible housing. M. Papai stated that she is very surprised about the executive market and concerned more housed are being pulled for this market. S. Barga – Often the client is an OU employee that doesn't want to buy a house until they have tenure.

VI. **Announcements & Other Business** – S. Marrs- Maxfield shared information on an affordable rural housing webinar she is hosting on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and invited commission members to attend. K. Andrews shared more reports that relate to housing. S. Grace – I hope we can look at some mixed-use neighborhood options. M. Papai – University estates was initially supposed to be a “mixed-use” development. S. Marrs-Maxfield – we do need to keep in mind that the market will determine the need. M. Papai - one of the biggest issues is transportation.

VII. **Adjourn** - D. Sharp made a motion to adjourn, S. Barga seconded, the motion to adjourn carried 1:06pm.